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**Extracts from The Spiritual Life
by Rev. Andrew Murray**

Carnal or Spiritual

The Self-life: the Hindrance to the Spiritual Life

Carnal or Spiritual.

Throughout the church of Christ there is a universal complaint of the feebleness of the Christian life, and there are tens of thousands of souls longing to know how to lead a better life. They find in God's word promises of perfect peace, of a faith that overcomes the world, of a joy that is unspeakable, of a life of ever abiding communion with Christ, hidden in the hollow of God's hand, and in the secret of his pavilion. But alas, thousands say they know not how to obtain it. Our meetings have just this one object: to try and find out what are the possibilities of the Christian life as God has revealed them in His word, what are the hindrances that keep the majority of believers out of that life, and what are the steps by which to come in and take possession.

I want to begin by calling your attention to what is always important at the outset of these conferences. There are two stages in the Christian life: the lower stage under the power of the flesh, and the stage of the true life in the power of the Spirit. Let me direct your attention to a passage in 1Cor.3:1-4.

There you have the first sorts of Christians, some are spiritual and some are carnal. And Paul says he finds it of the utmost importance, when he teaches people, to find out which of the two they are; for if he gave what is food to the spiritual to the carnal it would not do them any good. "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." You are in Christ, you are real Christians, but alas, you are feeble Christians, just like infants. "I have fed you with milk and not with meat. "There are some truths that are just like milk, suitable for carnal Christians; other truths of God's word, deep spiritual truths, are for spiritual people. "For hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able for ye are yet carnal." There you have the word "carnal" again. He says plainly, I want you to know that you are carnal, believers, but carnal believers, "For," here comes the proof, "For whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" He asks them to answer the question. The word "carnal" comes from the

Latin word meaning "flesh." If you do the works of the flesh this proves you are carnal, you walk as men do, not as children of God do, who lead a heavenly life. "One says I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" For the fourth time you have the word "carnal" and for the second time the very pointed question for them to answer. "Tell me, are ye not carnal?"

By the help of God I shall speak to you upon these two points:

1. What it is to be not Spiritual but Carnal.

2. The Way from Carnal to Spiritual.

I. NOT SPIRITUAL BUT CARNAL.

1. You are not spiritual but carnal, the apostle says. I am desirous that everyone as we go along try himself and answer the question, "Am I still carnal, or am I by the grace of God spiritual?" You know a doctor cannot do you any good unless there is first a thorough diagnosis of the case. He asks a number of questions, examines your lungs and heart, finds out what is wrong and prescribes the needful remedy. Until you find out what is wrong all the preaching of the most heavenly truths will do you no good. People must be brought to the realizing of their carnal state ere the knowledge of the spiritual life can be any real benefit.

"Oh God, we pray Thee, reveal the mystery of the Divine truth; the mystery of our own hearts, and the carnal state; the mystery of the Holy Spirit, and the spiritual life. We pray Thee now to come in and teach us. Give us grace to say, 'Lord search me, and if I am carnal, oh, discover it today, and open up to me the way into the spiritual life, to live as a spiritual man. God grant it.'"

I think if we look carefully at this passage we shall find **four principal marks of the carnal state.**

1. It is a state of protracted infancy. If I had here today a beautiful little child six months old with its chubby hands and feet, you would say "What a perfect child," but if in three years'

time we found that the child had not grown an inch we should conclude that something was the matter. If in another three years we again found no growth, we should at once say there is some terrible disease in that child that prevents its growth, for where there is health there is growth. That is now what Paul says to the Corinthians. You are young Christians, babes in Christ. At first a Christian may be carnal for he is young and does not know what sin is, but when a man has been a Christian for sometime, say after six months, a year or three years, or even ten years, and he does not grow, but remains at the same place where he started from as a babe, there is something the matter; there is some terrible disease; that disease is the carnal mind. A Christian when under the power of the flesh is in a state of protracted infancy. You find it said in the epistle to the Hebrews that when after they had been so long Christians they ought to be teachers, helping others, they still had to be fed with milk and were not able to take the meat of the full grown man. This is a state of protracted infancy and it is the state of the greater part of the Christian church. How many there are who will testify that the best time was the first three months after conversion; and after that they began to go back; they lost their joy and alas, they have never had such joy since then. They have lost their first love. At that time they used to conquer sin, but now it has the mastery. What are the marks of a babe? One is the babe cannot help himself, he has got to be helped by others. The other, he cannot help anyone else. Look at a baby in a house, you have got to have mother or sister or nurse to take care of him. A little baby needs always to be helped and cared for. That is the way with many Christians. They go to church, to prayer-meetings, conferences, and are ever seeking help from others. A little infant six months old cannot help another; so there are Christians who cannot really help others by their spiritual experience. Dear friends let us take this first mark of carnal state, test ourselves, and if there be no healthy growth let us bow before God in shame.

2. The carnal state is a state of sin and failure; no victory over sin. Paul writing to the Corinthians says, "There is among you envying, and strife, and divisions." That was the work of the

flesh and this was the great reason that he had to write to them the thirteenth chapter, because of their quarrelling. One exalted Paul, another thought Apollos was the more eloquent; another thought that Peter was older than either and better; they were divided into religious parties. They were just squabbling among themselves and got excited, and had strifes, divisions and envy. In Galatians, 5th chapter, you have envying's, strife's, etc. as the works of the flesh. Do we not find Christians who in some respects have a good measure of the grace of God and yet have never really conquered their temper, and so when another says a sharp thing to them they give a sharp reply? How many Christians there are who have never learned to love as God wants them to love, to love the unlovable. What is this but that they are yet in the carnal state? In them the flesh has more power than the Spirit.

Friends, until we confess with shame, I am carnal, we will not get into the life of the spiritual man. May God search us, and reveal our true state. Let us say, what is it that hinders the brightness of my life? And you will get the answer from God. Two powers are striving for mastery over you, Spirit and flesh; and if the Spirit is not ruling you it is because the flesh is ruling. This is why a man gives way to pride, self-conceit, worldliness, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. It is nothing but that he is still in the carnal state. You know a thing always gets its name from what is its most prominent characteristic. A spiritual man gets his name from the fact that the Spirit triumphs, rules in his life, even though there may still be somewhat of the flesh. You cannot be in intercourse with him without feeling that the Spirit is leading, guiding and controlling. He is called spiritual because spirituality is his chief characteristic.

Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in you." There was somewhat of the Spirit in them, but they had allowed the flesh to rule. The question comes to us, as a voice from heaven, "Are ye not carnal?" That worldliness, that unfaithfulness, that neglect of God's word. It is but the mark of one thing—you are

carnal, you have not given yourself over wholly to live the spiritual life.

3. The third mark of the carnal state. Along with this carnal state there may be found a great deal of spiritual gift. This is a very solemn thought. You know how this is illustrated in the case of the Corinthians. In the 1st chapter Paul says, "I thank God that in everything ye are enriched by him in all utterance and in all knowledge."

There were spiritual gifts among the Corinthians: gifts of prophecy, tongues, and many other gifts most remarkable. Indeed the gift of tongues was so remarkable that Paul had to check and warn them to be careful in their use of this gift. And yet Paul writes the whole epistle with the one idea, that they were full of quarrelling, pride, selfishness, etc. A man may have a spiritual gift of preaching or be able to speak with power, and yet his private life may be filled with pride until the world says, "we don't believe in that man." Where is his humility? A man may be an evangelist and lead hundreds to Christ and yet you will hear it said "How full of self." The world says "I don't believe in that man he is too full of himself." Can it be that a man who is a powerful man in the service of God can be carnal? It can be. That is what we want to make plain. A man may claim the baptism of the Holy Spirit and get it as a Spirit of power and a Spirit of zeal, and yet that man may be terribly lacking in the graces of a holy life—in humility, gentleness, tenderness, before God and man, in that meekness of the Lamb of God which is the chief grace of the Christian life. Look at the Corinthians; they had spiritual gifts of prophecy, tongues, etc., yet they were unwilling to be subject one to the other, there was strife as to who should speak first. Don't think that the carnal state is the state of a man in whom there is no good. A man may be a preacher, evangelist, sabbath school teacher, organizer, and yet, alas, God may say to that man, "Are you not carnal?" Does he not do as much good in the end? No. He may help another to the Christian life but the Christian life he helps him to is such a mixed one that it is feeble and does not stand. The man whose inner life is under the rule of the Spirit, who is himself spiritual, will beg-et really spiritual

children; he will impart the life of God in power. Being able to exercise spiritual gifts is no necessary proof that we are not carnal.

4. The carnal state brings an incapacity for receiving spiritual truth. Just note how distinctly Paul says this in writing to the Corinthians. In the first and second chapters he had been speaking about himself, Christ having sent him to preach the cross, not with human wisdom but in the power of the Spirit. Then in the third chapter he speaks about the church, and he turns to them and says, I have received the mystery of God but I cannot tell you. Why not? Were the Corinthians very stupid? No, they were great seekers after wisdom, they prided themselves upon their knowledge. In the passage that I read a short time ago you will remember it said they were "enriched in all knowledge." They were a cultured, thoughtful people. The wisdom of the world was beautiful in their eyes, and yet Paul said, all your wisdom will not help you. If I were to speak spiritual truth you would take it into a carnal mind and intellect and it would be an injury to you. There is a terrible mistake made right at this point very often. Paul says, before I can write to them I must settle it in my mind that they are carnal people. I must let them know that they are carnal and bring them to the point of realizing that they are carnal. How often in the church of Christ we preach to people who are carnal, deep spiritual truths; we clothe our thoughts in beautiful words and illustrations; they say "What a beautiful sermon" and practically it does them very little good. Was not the sermon true? Was not the truth of the Bible in it? Yes, but you preached spiritual truth to carnal people. Friends, as long as the Christian is carnal don't give him spiritual truth. You must bring- him to the point where he recognizes that he is carnal. The carnal state is incapable of receiving spiritual truth.

II. FROM CARNAL TO SPIRITUAL.

Paul did not want the Corinthians to rest in the carnal state. No! He wanted them to pass from carnal to spiritual. That is what we need too. And the question comes, how are we to get from the one to the other? **Note four of the principal steps.**

1. Step One. The believer must be convicted, and brought to the confession of his being in the carnal state. You know that before a sinner can be converted he must be convicted of sin; he must know and confess his transgressions, and his lost estate. Just so, believers must see that they are in a wrong state; before they can get into the spiritual life they must be brought under conviction of the shame and evil of this carnal state. There is a great difference between conviction before conversion and this. Then, that which principally occupied the mind was the thought, "I am lost, I am under condemnation;" the great idea was the greatness of his transgressions, and the desire to have them pardoned. There were two things that he was not convicted of: that his nature is utterly sinful, the other that there are many hidden heart sins, that he has never known. This is the reason God brings a believer into what might be termed a second conviction. It is most needful that he be fully convicted of two things: the utter impotence of the flesh to do any good; the mighty power of the flesh to work evil. The flesh is ruling- him. He has the Spirit of God in him, and why does he yet do these things? It is just the seventh of Romans, "I am struggling- to do right and I cannot." Oh friends, it is when a man is brought under conviction of the utter impotence of the flesh to do good, its helplessness, that he will understand why he lost his temper, and why pride comes up, and why he speaks wrong" words. The flesh takes him captive; the law of sin in him binds him hand and foot. Then comes those great hidden sins that the world counts very little, which are seen to be works of the flesh. The Holy Spirit convicts of pride as being of the flesh; unloving thoughts toward wife, or child, or servant; self-pleasing before God and man; and so he needs an entire deliverance, different from that at conversion. Then he was delivered from the curse of sin, now he wants deliverance from the power of sin. Many in the church of Christ will have to cry, "Woe is me, O wretched man that I am, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing." It is simply because the flesh has power that you sin, you must find deliverance. And there is no deliverance but by becoming an entire spiritual man.

2. The 2nd step is that a man must be made to see and believe that the spiritual life is a possibility. A great many people will say in a creed that they believe in the Holy Ghost. They have no doubt about the existence of the Holy Ghost, and that He is the Third Person of the Blessed God-Head. They are orthodox on all these points; but, it is an intellectual belief. They practically do not believe in what the Holy Ghost can do in a believer every day of his life. A man must be brought to see that there is a spiritual life within his reach; that there is a spiritual life which it is his duty to live; that there is a spiritual life he is in need of and may claim. There is a life in the Spirit. Note such expressions as "Walk in the Spirit," "Live in the Spirit," "By the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body." Just take the sixteen verses of the eighth chapter of Romans in which the Holy Spirit is mentioned, and a man must begin to see that God wants him to be a spiritual man. He cannot bear to have me carnal. God commands me to be spiritual and by the grace of God, just as certainly as Christ's blood flowed for my sins, so Christ's Spirit can lead me down into the place of absolute helplessness where He will live in me in His Divine power, and renew my whole nature into spiritual. Oh, take this step before I go further. Reach out at once and begin in a simple act of faith to obey God's call. Say, "O God, a spiritual life is possible, I can become a spiritual man." Let us begin and believe that the God who gave the Holy Spirit delights in nothing more than to give the Holy Spirit in each of us to live this life. When a man is convicted of a carnal life and believes in the possibility of a spiritual life lie comes to the third step.

3. The 3rd step. Are you willing, to give up everything, to get the spiritual life? Then comes the time of struggling. A great many delight to read about the spiritual life, but that is not enough. I must buy. At what price? Give up all. You must sell all to buy the pearl of great price. Come with every sin and every folly, all temper, everything you love, your whole life, and place it in the possession of Christ. Die to everything and be fully given up to God. It is only in the vessel that is fully cleansed that the Holy Spirit can do His work. Here in Chicago

the question is often asked, "Will a thing pay?" If it will pay men will undertake anything. If there is one thing that will pay it is to give up everything for God—everything of the flesh—to become a truly spiritual man.

4. The 4th and last step. When a man says "I am willing" then he must come in faith and claim it. It is just faith over again. It is faith from beginning to end. When a man gives up all, he must look up at the Lord Jesus to whom the Father has given the Holy Spirit, claim the promise and believe that he receives it. Bow before God, the Holy One, in deep humility and submission; with faith in His promise. His power. His great love. His near providence—God, who is a spirit and gives the Spirit, will, in the fellowship with Himself, make thee a spiritual man.

May God in His mercy open the eyes of all His people to discern the two states of carnal and spiritual. May He bring all who are yet in the carnal state to full conviction and confession. And through them may He bring many to the acceptancy of the full spiritual life He has provided in Christ Jesus.

The Self-life: the Hindrance to the Spiritual Life

Let me begin, for the sake of any who are here for the first time, by saying a word about what we are doing and where we are. These meetings are not simply for the discussion or exposition of scriptural truth, but have all a very definite, practical object. Their starting point is very simple. Many Christians feel that their life is not right. They long to have their life put right, and ask the question, "Is it possible to live as God would have us do?" We desire to come and show them exactly what it is that is wrong, and exactly what it is that God is willing and able to do for them, and then to bring them to take the step by which they pass out of the wrong state into the life that is well pleasing to God. This is our work, and I do pray you in great love, every one, to set aside any tendency to come and merely to listen to the exposition of truth. We have such a terrible habit of going to church to listen and to learn and to think, while the heart often remains untouched, that we get into the habit of listening- to the most solemn things without any practical result. Let us try and come into God's presence tonight, and in His presence to say, "If there is anything wrong about me I pray God to set it right." Let there be in our hearts a hungering after righteousness.

We began yesterday morning by looking at the two sides of the Christian life, the carnal, fleshy side, in which a believer is continually sinning, and then at the spiritual side in which the Holy Spirit helps a man to conquer and makes a man really a spiritual man. Yesterday evening we went on to look at the spiritual side and we found in Romans eight the description of what the Holy Spirit will do for a believer who gives way to Him. The Holy Spirit will make him a free man, free from the law of sin and death. The Holy Spirit will dwell in him, will lead him and teach him to walk after Him as his guide. The Holy Spirit will come into him as a Divine life power to mortify and make dead the deeds of the body, and the Holy Spirit will come

into him to bear a definite, heavenly, living witness that He is in him. This morning we went further.

How will such a life look when a man has to act it out in his daily walk, and we took one word as the standard God gives: "The fruit of the Spirit is love." We said if the Holy Spirit comes and fills a man, the man will live a life full of love amid all difficulties and trials and temptations.

And now this evening comes the question' if that be true, if the Holy Spirit will set me free from the law of sin and death; if the Holy Spirit will mortify the deeds of the body, why is it that I do not live that life? If love be the fruit of the Holy Spirit and I have the Holy Spirit given me in conversion, why is it I do not live such a life of perfect love, and that so few live it?' There must be some terrible hindrance.

And so there is. The hindrance is just one word, one little word of four letters, "s-e-l-f." The life of God and the life of Christ and the life of the Holy Spirit are all waiting to come into you. But on one condition: you must lose your own life. Give it up and God will give you the new life. But if you allow self to live in you and have its way even partially, it hinders the work of the Holy Spirit and though you have the Holy Spirit in you as a child of God He cannot do His work in power.

Now I want to tell you how you can get rid of this hindrance. My text is Matt 16:24. "Then said Jesus unto His disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." What must he do? He must deny himself; he must deny self. If a man wants to be my disciple he must deny himself and he must take up his cross and follow me. We all, by nature, follow self. Every man does it. It is natural. Christ says we must give up self, must forever give up listening to self, and listen to Him alone. Take Him in the place of self, give up the life of self and take Him to be your life. Let us try and understand the connection in which this wonderful word comes to us. You remember how in Caesarea Philippi, Christ asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am?" They gave Him the different answers that men were

giving, and He then said, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered for the rest, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And listen to what Christ said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, because thou knowest this. Thou art blessed because thou knowest that I am the Son of God." And what more does He say? "Flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you but my Father which is in heaven." God, my Father has been teaching you by His Holy Spirit and you have learned that I am the Son of God. The disciples did not learn it in their catechism in those days; their mothers did not teach it to them; Christ, Himself, did not say in so many words, "Now remember, I am the Son of God." But He lived as the Son of God, and God taught them to know Him as Christ. Then Christ goes on and says those two wonderful things. "Upon this rock will I build my church," and "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Think of those four things spoken to Peter. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona," "The Father Himself hath revealed it to thee," "On this rock I will build My church," and "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." And now what comes? Peter is up in the heights. Peter has learned a great heavenly lesson. And what comes now? Christ begins to tell them, "You must know what must come. They are going to take me and kill me. I will have to be crucified but the third day I will rise again." Peter said, "God forbid. Far be that from Thee." In the margin it is properly translated "Pity thyself." Peter says, "Have mercy upon thyself. Why dost thou speak thus, Lord? Pity thyself. That shall never be." But Christ says, "Get thee behind me, Satan." It is such a hellish thing that you have said, it is Satan that has taught you, will you learn a lesson now? The same man who an hour ago had been saying things that God had taught him began to say things that the Devil had taught him. What a wonderful thing is a converted but unsatisfied man; he has the Spirit of God in him but he has a deal of the Devil in him, too. Then Christ says, after having- spoken about His own cross and His own death, "If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross." That means "Peter, it is not only I that have got to die, but you, too. Not only I must be crucified, but you must take up your cross. Peter, you are frightened at the thought that I am going to be crucified, but you have to be crucified, too." Poor Peter. "If a

man wants to be my disciple he must deny himself and must take up his cross and he must follow me." What a come down for Peter. Peter was up in the heavens. Peter was living in the higher life, rejoicing in that wonderful word, that Christ calls him a blessed man because he knew that He was the Son of God. And why this come down? Just because Peter has not given up all his thoughts to the teaching of God and the Holy Spirit. Peter knows a great deal about Christ and his kingdom of glory but he does not believe in His crucifixion.

There are so many Christians who believe in a thousand wonderful and beautiful things about Christ but they do not believe the chief thing of all, that of taking their cross and being crucified with Jesus. Listen, this word of Jesus teaches us, as well as Peter, what it is that hinders us from understanding Him and enjoying Him, and He teaches us how to get rid of this trouble. I want to speak to you this evening about self.

Let me ask these questions:

1. Where does it come from, this self that has got to be denied and crucified?
2. What are its works?
3. How can it be conquered?
4. What have I got to do?

In the first place what is this self? Christ says: deny self. What does that mean? Peter, instead of denying self, denied Jesus. When Christ was being led before Caiphas, three times he said, "I do not know the man. I have nothing to do with Him." And he said that with an oath. If any man were to say to you, "You have stolen my watch," you would be indignant and would deny the charge. Even so Peter denied Jesus. Jesus had told him to do just the opposite. "Peter, there is one thing you must deny and that is your own self, your own life, your own will." But where did I get that self from? Did not God create

that self in me? Of course He did. Every man and angel has got a self that comes from God's hands. God gave me a self-determining power by which I can say what I want to do with myself, and what for? That every day I may come to God and bring myself for him to fill, and find my blessedness in waiting upon Him and receiving of His fullness. But what a ruin sin has wrought. Listen for a moment while I speak to you of something that was before ever man came on this world. The throne of God was surrounded by bright spirits, all pure and perfect. One of the brightest of these pure spirits began to look at himself and wonder at all the beauty and glory God had given him. He admired himself and pride came into his heart and he began to say, "I am as God." He turned his desire from God to self; he thought, "It is not right that I should be subject to this God." And he lifted up himself and said, "I, the morning star, the prince of light, am I not the chief among the powers of heaven?" He turned away from God to self and pride entered his heart, and he fell out of light into darkness, and was changed from an angel into a devil, from the brightness of heaven into the blackness and outer darkness of everlasting hell.

That is what pride, that is what self did for that angel. Instead of turning to God he turned to himself and he fell. Then God, to restore all this glory created man that in man His own Son might show forth His glory. He said to man, "I have given you a self, but let that self always turn to me and you shall always stand in the light. Do my will and I will fill you with life and blessing everlasting. But alas, the Devil came to man because he hated him as he thought of what man might become as the king of the world. He came to Eve and said, "If you eat of that fruit you will be like God." He not only spoke these words, but in and with these words he breathed into her ear and heart the very poison of hell, his own hellish pride. He said to her, "You can be like God, go and eat of that tree." Alas, she and Adam harkened and the very poison of hell entered into their blood and that self that lifted itself against God, and turned away from Him, became their nature. And so you and I, who are born of that Adam and Eve, we have in us a self that exalts itself against God.

We know too little what an evil nature we have within. We have an evil nature that exalts itself against God and over our fellowmen. The whole history of the human race is nothing but one great struggle, man against man, each trying to exalt himself higher than the other. One wants more power, another more learning, another more culture, another more pleasure than anyone else around. Alas! Self is the God that rules the world. There is not one exception. Oh, if we were but conscious that we have this evil self within us how we would cry, "Deliver me from this monster, O, my God." If there were to come creeping along here a poisonous snake and making straight for someone, how we would jump away and say, "Kill that beast, deliver me from its poison." But alas, we are blind and run into our danger. A little child has sometimes been known to play with a snake. I know a home in South Africa, where the mother was away at church and had left a coloured girl in charge of her little baby just learning to creep and a sister a few years old. The baby was playing on the floor. A beautifully coloured but poisonous snake came into the room and lifting its head made ready to strike. The little child, all unconscious of its danger, crept along toward what looked so beautiful. As the snake was looking at it, just ready to strike, the coloured girl rushed from behind and seized the child. The child wished to play with that beautifully coloured snake. It knew not of the poison.

We have within us a self that has its poison from Satan, that has its poison from hell and yet we cherish and nourish it. What do we not do to please self and nourish self, and we make the devil within us strong. This is the reason why Christ calls us entirely to deny self. To deny self means that you must have nothing to do with him. If you did not steal that watch you must deny it, you reject with indignation the charge, the statement, that you stole it. So you must reject self. You ask why. Christ says you must take a cross and nail self to the cross. You ask why. Ah, you will never do what Christ says until you see the satanic origin of self, as a horrible rebellion against God. That is its origin, it comes out of hell and drags us back to hell.

2. Now look at its works. Look in your own life. What are the works of self? They are **chiefly these three. Self-will, self-trust and self-exaltation.**

First let us look at self-will. God created me with a will, and there is nothing in man more noble than a will. Sometimes people speak about having a broken will or too strong a will. If my will was ten times as strong as it is, it would not be too strong if it is given up to God. It is the great power with which a man can serve God. If it is not given up to God then the Devil has power to move it and self leads that will continually to sin against God. Self-will rules in the life of every natural man. He says, "I do what I like and I have a right to do what I like."

But I find among Christians that there are hundreds, who, if you ask, "Did ever you understand that when you became a Christian it was on the condition that you promise never to seek your own will?" They will all tell you they never understood that. But that is just what Christ demands. You are to do nothing but what God wills. You are to give up your will; self is to have no say in your life. That is the whole secret of salvation, to give up your will, yourself, to God. His will is the manifestation of what is in His heart, and if I take my will like an empty cup and say, "Fill my will with Thy will," then I live a blessed life. Many say, "I think I am a Christian and I must of course do the will of God in important things, but in the little things I cannot help following my own will." No. Self is the cause of all our sin against God, and all our wretchedness. Self-pleasing is another of the works of self. The whole life of man and nature has the pleasing of self as its moving principle. And even Christians seek far more to please themselves than to please God. No wonder that self becomes strong and that for its sake we sin unceasingly against the law of love to God and man.

Another work of self is self-confidence. I do not know a more remarkable example than Peter. Christ said to Peter, "Before the cock shall crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Peter said, "They may all forsake Thee but I will never leave Thee,"

and yet he denied Christ with an oath. How did that come? Simply from self-confidence. Peter could not believe of himself that he would deny his Lord. He said, "Thou knowest Lord that I love Thee. I have stood so much persecution for Thy sake. I will never deny Thee. I will go to the death with Thee." What was that but self-confidence? He trusted in himself and he fell.

A young person often says, "Six months ago I gave myself to the Lord and I had such a bright and happy time serving Jesus, but some way or other I got cold and went back and what is the reason?" My answer always is, "Only one thing, you trusted yourself." He says, "No, I certainly did not. I felt that I was a poor feeble creature and could do nothing. I did not trust myself." Ah, but my friend you did. If you had trusted Christ, He never could have let you fall. You trusted in yourself. You trusted in your earnestness, in your integrity or something in yourself, and then came all the trouble. Just so with many of you who tell me, "I cannot live the life I want to live." Here is the simple reason. You have been trusting self, trusting to be able by mere effort and mere watchfulness to gain the victory. If you trusted Christ you would not fall. You have not given up self to the death, to trust in God alone. Does not your heart begin to say, "God have mercy upon me and deliver me from self. If it has been self that has been tempting me to look away from Jesus, that has been coming between Jesus and myself, oh God deliver me."

The third form of self is self-exaltation, pride. Jesus said, "How can ye believe, who take honour one from another." I am not speaking now of the people of the world. All the wretched history of the world is owing to pride. But I am speaking about Christians. How much of touchiness there is about our position. If a man does not give me the honour I think I ought to have; if he puts me down to a lower place than I expect, how sensitive I am. How much envy and jealousy there is. Where does this come from?

Self-exaltation. I ask you believers, do not you know what it is to have a heart in which there is constantly coming in the

thought, "There I was clever. I knew how to manage those folks. There I made a beautiful prayer." How often those things are entertained and allowed free passage for a time. How often in the presence of God we exalt ourselves. A man can be proud about a very small matter. He can be proud of a fine head of hair, a fine suit of clothes, his learning or money. There is nothing on earth that a man cannot be proud about. A man may ride on a very fine horse and be proud about that. The beast does not make the man a bit better and yet he is proud about it. That is just the way the Devil befools a man. This accursed self from hell is at the root of all this. A seeking of our own honour. God's word says, God resisteth the proud. Self as seen has corrupted it, and is in its very nature proud and can be nothing else, therefore Christ says, deny self. Does not your heart begin to cry, "How can I get free from self and sin?"

3. How can it be conquered? Christ tells us: "Let a man deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." He puts the three words together, but they all amount to the same thing. The first is, let him deny himself. Let him say, "I have nothing to do with self. I will not listen to it. I will ignore it." That is what Peter said when he denied Christ, "I do not want to be connected with Christ or have anything to do with Him." So we must say to self, "I have nothing to do with it." Then Christ says, "Take up the cross." The cross always means death. Christ could not explain that to them further. They would not have understood Him. But Christ meant, "Just as I have got to give up my life and be crucified, you will have to be crucified spiritually." And that is what Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ. No longer I but Christ liveth in me." "And follow me." Oh, that blessed word. It must be instead of myself Jesus, Himself. Follow me. Here is a choice you have to make between these two. Shall I follow self or follow Jesus? Please self or please Jesus? Deny self or deny Jesus?

Remember that solemn lesson of Peter. He would not deny self and what did he come to? He denied Jesus. If you do not deny self utterly you will be denying Jesus every day. You will tell the world, "I have nothing" to do with Jesus just now, I am pleasing- myself." Now Christian, come tonight and make the

wonderful exchange. Come and begin to understand what a blessed thing it would be instead of self to follow Jesus. Peter did follow Jesus, though with many failures, and where did Christ take him? He took him to that place where he denied his Lord that he might learn to know himself thoroughly. He took him to Gethsemane to show him how little he could watch for one hour; then to the cross to show him how little he could suffer with him. Then He took him to the resurrection and showed Himself as the living Christ, who breathed His Spirit into him; then He took him to the ascension mount and said, "I am going to heaven and the Spirit and the fire will come." He led him to the place where he received the fullness of the Holy Spirit and then and not until then was self-dethroned. How is the reign of self to be cast out? How am I to be delivered from this secret power that I cannot see or root out? Christ says, "Deny self, take up your cross and follow me." Deny self. Take up the cross and say, "I desire to be crucified with Christ; I desire to be made conformable to His death," then follow Christ with your whole heart. Christ will come in and rule. You know the story of the strong man who kept his house until a stronger came and cast him out. But the stronger one did not stay to dwell. The house was cleansed and garnished but empty. After a time the evil spirit with seven others came in and dwelt there. It is not enough to cast out self; it will not help you unless He comes in; Christ the stronger must come in and dwell there, and then He keeps the house in safety. Let us all deny that cursed self; take up the cross and follow Him. He will take us to the place of safety and victory.

4. And now comes a few words as to what we must do.

Can a man in one moment deny self and be freed from it, or is it the work of a lifetime. Both. You can tonight, if God gives you a sight of the accursedness of self and what self has really been doing all the years of your Christian life, in one step take your place in the position of a man who utterly denies self, and give yourself to be possessed by Jesus. You can do that in one minute. Many do not do this because they are not ready. They are not willing to confess they have no true insight; that self is the only cause of their sin. But I ask you what else can be the cause of all these sins that have made you unhappy? Temper,

pride, wilfulness, worldliness, self-pleasing. It is nothing but self. Are you going to confess that tonight? My life might have been full of the Holy Ghost and full of Jesus, full of humility and full of God. But, alas, what has my life been, and all through that cursed evil root of self. I did not know how bad it was and how it was running my whole Christian life. If I could tear it out of my life and kill it, I would do it if it cost me blood. You cannot do that. But you can do something that is better. You can come and quietly condemn it at the feet of Jesus as an accursed thing. You can cast it down there and say, "Son of God, I follow Thee with my whole heart to the very uttermost. I desire to follow Thee to the very depths of death. I desire to give myself up utterly and wholly to Thee. I desire to take Thee and let Thee fill my whole being." Believer, Christ can do it. I know I am speaking" in vain if there is any one here who is pretty well contented with himself. Anyone who says, "I am an earnest Christian, I am doing my best. I am not what I ought to be; but I do fairly." If there is any one here who thinks thus, I have not much hope of his taking this step. But if there is one who says, "I feel sinful, I feel wretched, I cannot live this life any longer. I have denied my Lord Jesus too often already by many things I have done; but now no longer. I have tried hard but have failed. I now see the root of it all. Self has been seeking to conquer its own evil works, and has only been strengthened all the time.

Come, my beloved, and bring self and lay it at the feet of Jesus. Cast it into His very bosom and believe tonight that the Son of God is coming into you to be a new self, to be your very life, because He will live in you by His Holy Spirit. Paul says, "It is no longer I but Christ that liveth in me." You may not be able to explain it, but just take the words of Paul, "I live no longer but Christ liveth in me." It is no longer the old I, the old self, it is Christ. Oh that God might give us a sight of what that means. And may God give us grace to take the step. Nothing else can give us peace or make us holy. "Lord Jesus! Come in. Shall we say this? Are you willing that God search you tonight?" Come then, bow your heads and begin by telling God so. And then let God shine into your hearts and let Him show you what a cursed thing this self has been in your life.